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ABSTRACT

This State Plan for Environmental Education, proposed by the Texas Advisory Council on Environmental Education, is designed to promote a greater public awareness and understanding among Texas citizens of their relationships with and dependence upon the natural and man-made environments. Such an awareness should foster an ability to comprehend and evaluate the total costs of proposed trade-offs between environmental quality, continued economic growth, and standards of living. The plan calls for coalescing the resources and capabilities of the communities, educational institutions, environmental organizations, governmental bodies, and industries to provide essential educational services. Goals and objectives of the plan are expressed, together with the operational structure and time-phase sequence of implementation. The status, functions, and makeup of participating sectors in the program are also described. (BL)

ED 077693

A NEW ENVIRONMENTAL ETHIC

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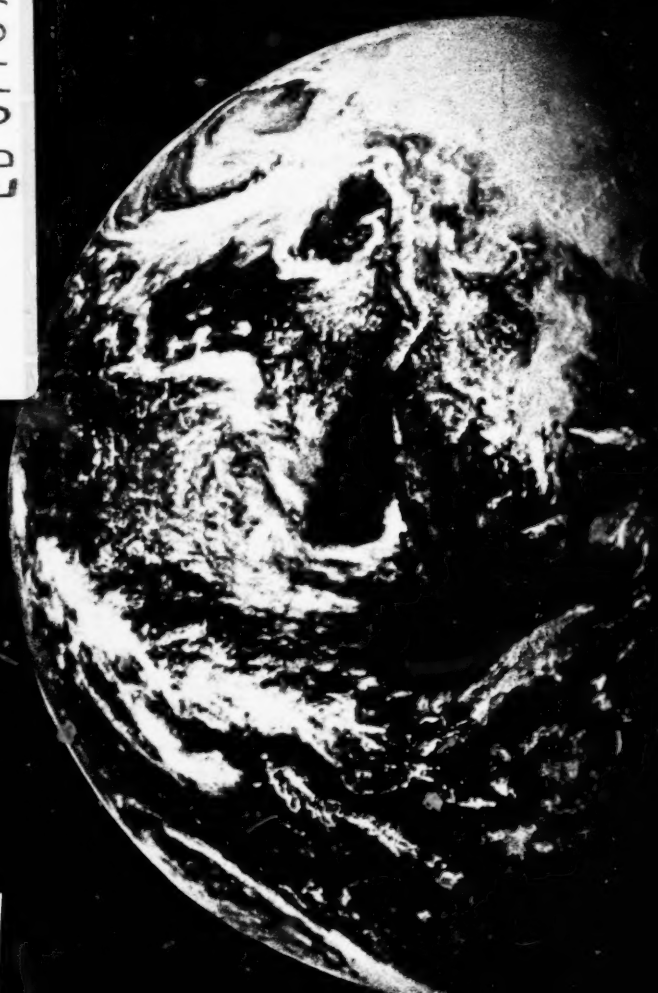

TEXAS STATE PLAN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

A Report of the Texas Advisory Council on Environmental Education

SE 016 132

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TEXAS STATE PLAN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

prepared by

THE TEXAS ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD 4

INTRODUCTION 7

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES 9

STRUCTURE 11

OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE CHART 13

FUNCTIONS OF PARTICIPATING SECTORS 14

- Governor 14
- Department of Community Affairs 14
- Texas Advisory Council on Environmental Education 14
- Texas Office of Environmental Education 14
- Governmental Sector 16
- Private Sector 17
- Quasi-Public Sector 18
- Educational Institutions 19

PRIORITIES 21

TIME-PHASE SEQUENCE 22

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE 23

FOREWORD

The Texas State Plan for Environmental Education has been the culmination of an intensive effort during the past two years by the Texas Advisory Council on Environmental Education (TACEE). The Council was appointed in mid-1971 by then Governor Preston Smith to develop a statewide coordination and leadership mechanism for environmental education in Texas.

TACEE has been funded jointly by the State; with primary support from the Office of the Governor, the Texas Education Agency and the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System; and the U. S. Office of Education, under the provisions of P.L. 91-516, the Environmental Education Act of 1970.

Composed with broad representation from both public and private sectors, the TACEE has conducted a variety of activities during its brief tenure designed to support and supplement its primary objective of proposing a State Plan for Environmental Education in Texas.

Some of the more significant activities initiated by the Council prior to designing the Texas State Plan for Environmental Education have included:

- Sponsoring and organizing a statewide annual observance of Environmental Education Week for Texas;

- Identifying and cataloging environmental education needs and resources in Texas among the colleges and universities, public schools, business and industry groups, environmental and civic organizations, and public officials;

- Preparing a statewide Environmental Speakers Bureau;

- Distributing a series of publications prepared for the Council on public awareness of environmental problems; and

- Co-sponsoring environmental workshops for teachers.

In addition to the Council Members who have given unselfishly of their time and talents to this effort, many other individuals and organizations have contributed liberally to the development of this Plan. To all of these, the Council extends its heartfelt appreciation.

Special commendation and thanks are due to Mr. James T. Goodwin, the original Chairman of TACEE, Mr. Charles W. Nix, who served with distinction as Interim Chairman, and to Mrs. B. E. (Ginger) Bremberg for her dedicated service to the Council.

Joe B Harris

Joe B. Harris, *Chairman*
Texas Advisory Council on
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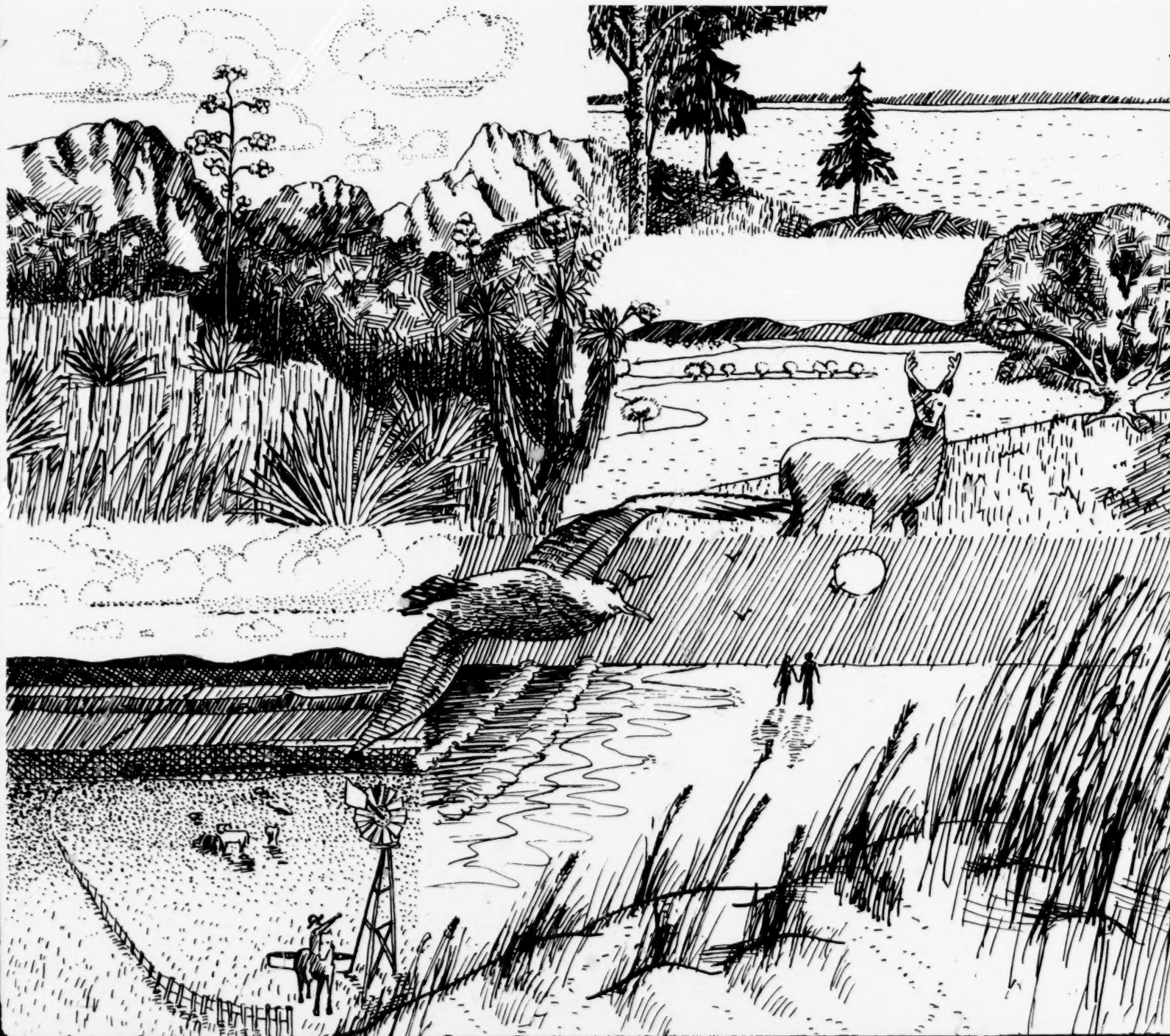


INTRODUCTION

The following State Plan for Environmental Education is proposed by the Texas Advisory Council on Environmental Education for the purpose of fostering a greater public awareness and understanding among Texas citizens of their relationships with and dependence upon the natural and man-made environment.

Texans have a historic pride in the natural beauty and diversity of their State. Its sweeping prairies, majestic mountains, pine forests, pristine deserts, rolling hill country, wildflower fields, quiet streams, blue lakes and vast stretches of coastline are a heritage of contrast and variety.

However, increasing population, rapid growth of industry and technology, indiscriminant use of natural resources and unwise planning pose a real and present threat to this unique natural endowment.

Already the signs of environmental degradation are becoming evident throughout our State. The exhausts of automobiles, factories, and other industrial processes are polluting our air. Our lakes, streams, rivers and coastal waters are being spoiled by careless haste to achieve specific, short-range objectives. The production and consumption patterns of our society—government, industry, business, households—pose threats to the quality of our environment. Despite the fact that the accomplishments of an industrial, technological age have given this generation of Texans material comforts and economic prosperity never dreamed of by early settlers that tamed the rugged territory that is now Texas, we are beginning to realize that our accomplishments have also resulted in

unanticipated costs in environmental quality.

We must therefore develop a new relationship between ourselves and our surroundings. Unlike those early Texans that "tamed" this land, we can no longer afford to look upon ourselves as conquerors of our environment. Instead, we must learn to live in harmony with our surroundings; we must foster a new kinship with the Earth. At stake is the quality of our future existence, and possibly our survival.

The development of this new and necessary environmental attitude is dependent upon a better public understanding of the complex relationships between man and his total environment. But, because the widespread recognition of the environmental threat is a relatively recent phenomenon, our governmental and educational institutions have not been adequately prepared to effectively recognize or address the environmental education needs of our citizens and public decision-makers.

Therefore, this Texas State Plan for Environmental Education is recommended to the Governor as a comprehensive response to this pressing need. It calls for coalescing the resources and capabilities of our communities, educational institutions, environmental organizations, governmental bodies and industries to provide essential educational services.

Environmental education, as it is needed in Texas, must transcend the traditional notion that education is strictly a classroom phenomenon. The threats to our environment are too urgent for us to concentrate our environmental education resources strictly on our youth and wait for them to become the decision-makers of tomorrow. Environmental education must also reach today's business and community leaders, governmental officials and the public that elects them.

Moreover, because environmental problems are complex and seldom respect traditional discipline boundaries, we must assume a broadly defined approach to environmental education. Environmental considerations must be integrated into diverse academic disciplines, professions and occupational pursuits.

In dealing with environmental education and in the design of this State Plan, the Texas Advisory Council on Environmental Education has been guided by the following definition:

Environmental education is the process by which citizens are made more knowledgeable of the natural and man-made systems which support and affect the existence of life-forms. This process should lead to a personal sensitivity and understanding of the intricate relationships between man and his environment, and should influence the identification of problems and the exploration of alternative solutions.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Texas Advisory Council on Environmental Education agrees that a comprehensive State environmental education program should be developed. This program should provide the citizens of Texas with opportunities for increased awareness and understanding of the natural and man-made environment on which they depend. Such an awareness should foster an ability to comprehend and evaluate the total costs of proposed trade-offs between environmental quality, continued economic growth, and standards of living.

It is the Council's intention that environmental education have the following goals and objectives:

Goal:

To create an environmental literacy which should promote a personal environmental ethic among the great majority of Texas citizens.

Objectives:

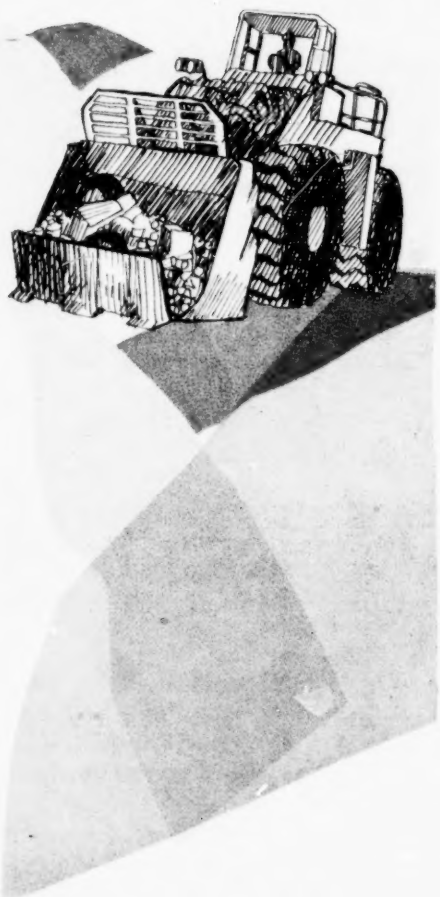
- Collect and disseminate pertinent environmental education resources through public and private channels to all sectors of the State.
- Encourage those groups and agencies involved in adult education to include environmental education material in their programs.
- Promote bilingual capabilities in all aspects of environmental education programs.
- Inform all Texans about the effects of their life-styles on the consumption of our finite natural resources and the quality of our environment.

Goal:

To promote more effective public and private institutional responses to environmental problems.

Objectives:

- Provide a simple mechanism through which citizens can communicate their environmental concerns to the appropriate public institutions, officials and employees.
- Assist governmental policy-makers at the State, local and regional levels in becoming more aware of and sensitive to environmental considerations.
- Assist local officials and other individuals in identifying and contacting the appropriate institutions concerning environmental decisions that affect them.
- Provide general information to citizens about legal procedures available to them to deal with environmental issues.
- Make environmental information more accessible to the public and



private interests that determine the allocation of available resources.

Goal:

To promote and assist research into the basic relationship of man and his environment.

Objectives:

- Analyze the connection between individual attitudes, social/cultural relationships and their environmental consequences.
- Explore the growth and consumption needs of our society relative to resource capabilities and alternatives.
- Study the effects of environmental degradation on basic human rights and the existing social/political/legal institutions devised to protect those rights.
- Explore methods of attaining a balance between population growth and distribution and the availability of natural resources.
- Identify the conflicts and alternatives among environmental issues.
- Determine levels of public awareness and concern to assist in directing environmental education efforts.

Goal:

To encourage an environmental orientation in career development programs.

Objectives:

- Foster a stronger environmental emphasis in teacher training programs.
- Encourage the development of environmental vocational training in Texas educational institutions.
- Encourage the expansion and use of work-related educational experiences such as intern programs to assist State, local and regional governments in identifying and solving environmental problems.
- Promote a stronger environmental orientation to professional fields of study such as engineering, medicine, architecture, law, public administration and others.

STRUCTURE

In order to accomplish these goals and objectives, it is recommended that a state-level "Office of Environmental Education" (OEE) be established within the Texas Department of Community Affairs. As such, it will serve as the nucleus of statewide environmental education activity by assisting and coordinating the efforts of the governmental sector (Federal, State, and local), the private sector (industry, civic groups, organizations and individuals), the quasi-public sector (private groups, organizations and individuals operating with governmental sanction), and the general public to promote an expanding program of environmental education in Texas.

The proposed OEE will operate in full compliance with the constitutionally and legislatively granted powers, duties and sanctions of all State agencies involved in environmental education. Its approach will be to encourage such agencies to continue and develop their current educational activities, to provide the assistance needed to insure widespread availability and dissemination of existing material, and to identify and resolve areas of need or duplication in environmental education efforts.

The OEE will work closely with the Texas Education Agency as the primary agent for environmental education in the public school system, with the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, the member agencies of the Interagency Council on Natural Resources and the Environment, and with other agencies, educational service centers, local governments and regional councils of governments, and private groups in their respective areas of concern.

The Director of the OEE will serve as administrative head of the Office and be responsible to the Director of the Department of Community Affairs. The state-level activities of the OEE will primarily consist of maintaining a statewide clearinghouse and library of environmental education resources and an Environmental Speakers Bureau.

In addition to its state-level activities, the OEE will maintain regional offices throughout Texas within the Governor's State Planning Regions. The OEE regional offices will be staffed by regional representatives responsible for coordinating and conducting environmental education efforts within their respective regions. They will maintain a two-way flow of communication between the OEE and the local and regional governments and public officials, libraries, educational institutions and educational service centers, businesses and private organizations. This will maximize the interchange of environmental education information, materials and expertise, and provide channels for dissemination of local and state-level resources.

Additional responsibilities of the regional representatives will be to

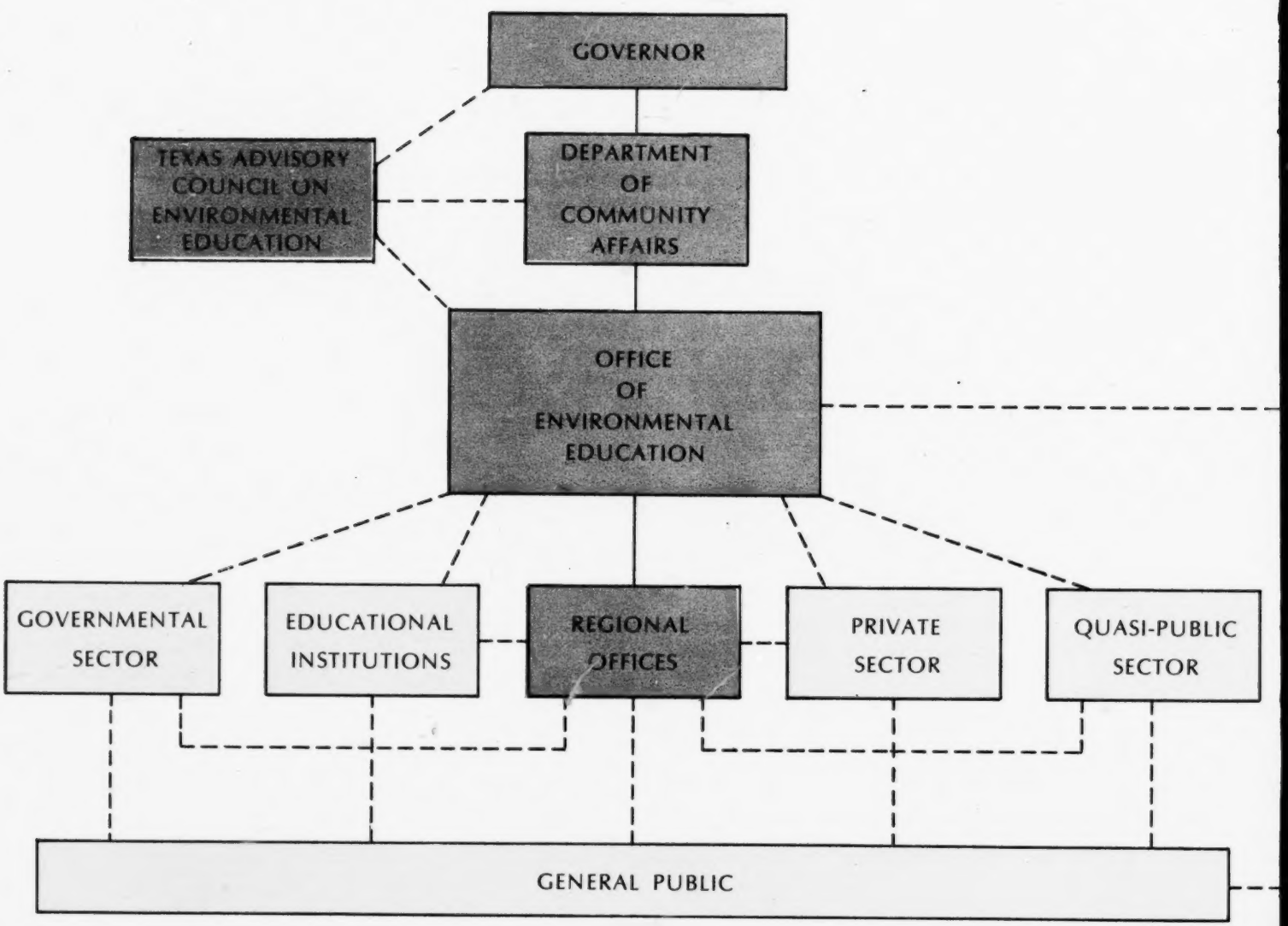
coordinate Environmental Education Week activities within their regions and to assess the environmental awareness and special environmental education needs of the different social, ethnic and economic groups in their respective areas.

An important function of both the regional and the State OEE offices will be to refer interested citizens or groups to the appropriate public and private institutions for prompt assistance or information regarding their environmental concerns.

The Texas Advisory Council on Environmental Education will serve the OEE and the Department of Community Affairs in an advisory and review capacity concerning matters of policy and program priorities.

On the following organization chart, the solid lines designate direct channels of authority and dotted lines illustrate communication channels.

OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE



FUNCTIONS OF PARTICIPATING SECTORS

The following section outlines the status, functions and makeup of the various participants in the State environmental education program as depicted by the preceding chart.

Governor

In his capacity as Chief Executive of the State, the Governor serves as the chief administrative authority for the Department of Community Affairs and, therefore, for the proposed Office of Environmental Education. The resources and guidance of the Governor's Office will assist the OEE in developing avenues of communication and cooperation with the various governmental units and private groups involved in environmental education.

Department of Community Affairs

The Department of Community Affairs will have direct administrative responsibility for the Office of Environmental Education. It will provide funding, staff, office space and facilities and will oversee and review policies and programs of the OEE. The close relationship that the Department of Community Affairs has established with local governments and community groups will be invaluable in establishing productive environmental education efforts throughout the State.

Texas Advisory Council on Environmental Education

The Texas Advisory Council on Environmental Education shall continue to serve the Governor and the Executive Department in an advisory capacity in matters related to environmental education. In addition, it shall act as an advisory board to the OEE and the Department of Community Affairs in regard to environmental education policies, priorities and programs.

Office of Environmental Education

The Office of Environmental Education shall fulfill the following functions and have the following responsibilities:

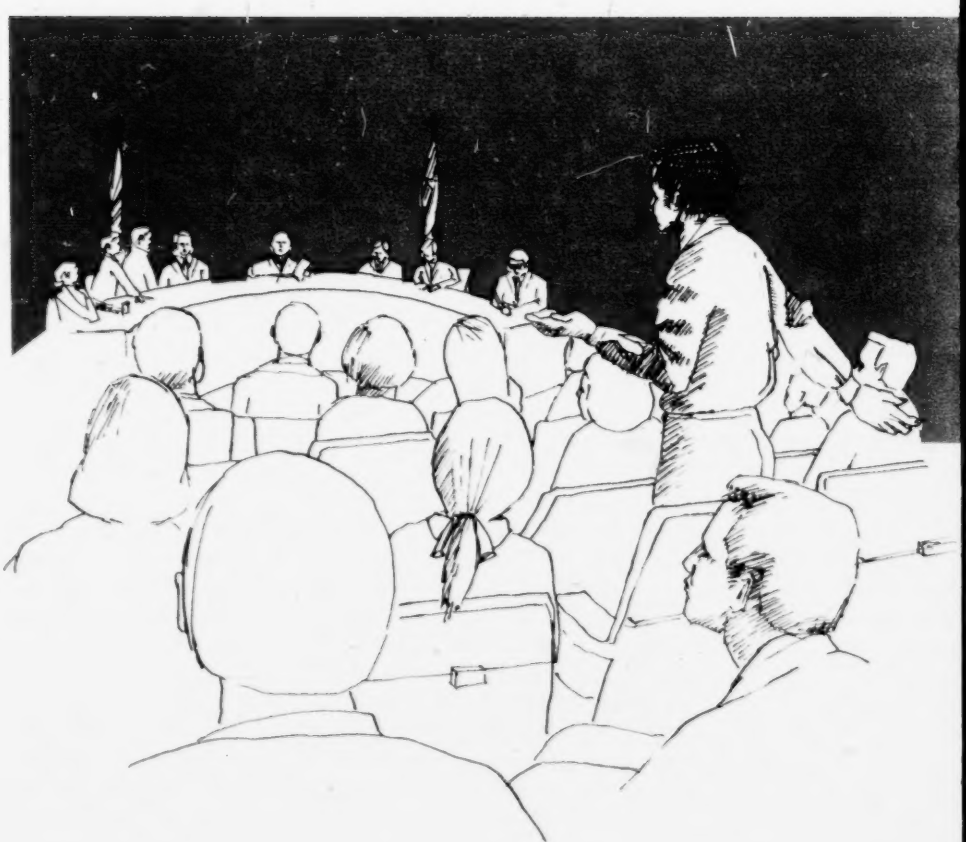
- Catalog the type, quantity, quality and cost of environmental education materials available from the private sector, State agencies, and other sources. This will be a continuous process requiring constant monitoring of production in all sectors.
- Assist governmental agencies and the private sector in disseminating their in-house environmental education materials to groups, institutions and individuals within the State. To obtain optimum utility and impact, the OEE, when requested, will assist publishers in directing their materials to the audiences with the most pressing need.

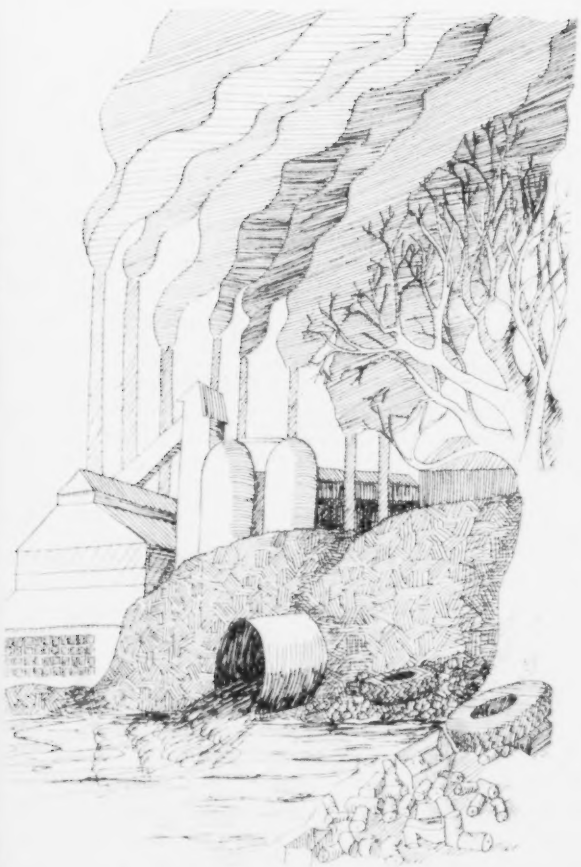
- Maintain a comprehensive, multi-resource library system containing such materials as books, films, film strips, pamphlets, technical reports, tapes and periodicals. Initially, this will most likely be a sample library which could be contacted to determine the types of resources available, where they might be obtained, the quantity that is available, and the expense involved in obtaining the needed resources.

- Maintain and continually update a statewide Environmental Speakers Bureau. Such a bureau will contain information on prospective speakers such as areas of environmental expertise, background and profession, travel requirements and restrictions, type of presentation, presentation equipment needs, and audience type and size preferences. The OEE will request that groups utilizing speakers from the Bureau evaluate the speakers' performance for the OEE's file.

- Assist and support educational institutions in the development of environmental education curricula.

- Initiate in-house production of needed environmental education resources including multi-media materials.





- Identify needs for environmental education materials, activities, strategies, personnel and funding for governmental agencies and the private sector and conduct and update surveys and analyses of public environmental awareness.

- Review and provide assistance in the preparation of proposals from Texas groups for Federal environmental education funds.

- Organize, promote and participate in the annual observance of a statewide Environmental Education Week. This will entail the in-house generation of materials to be used by the public media in publicizing the occasion, the notification of local organizations and public officials, and the encouragement of local groups to undertake environmental projects during this observance.

- Cooperate and interact with local and regional governmental units through the regional representatives.

- Develop a system for referring individuals, organizations or governmental units to the sources that can assist them with their environmental problems.

- Promote and assist research into the basic relationship of man and his environment.

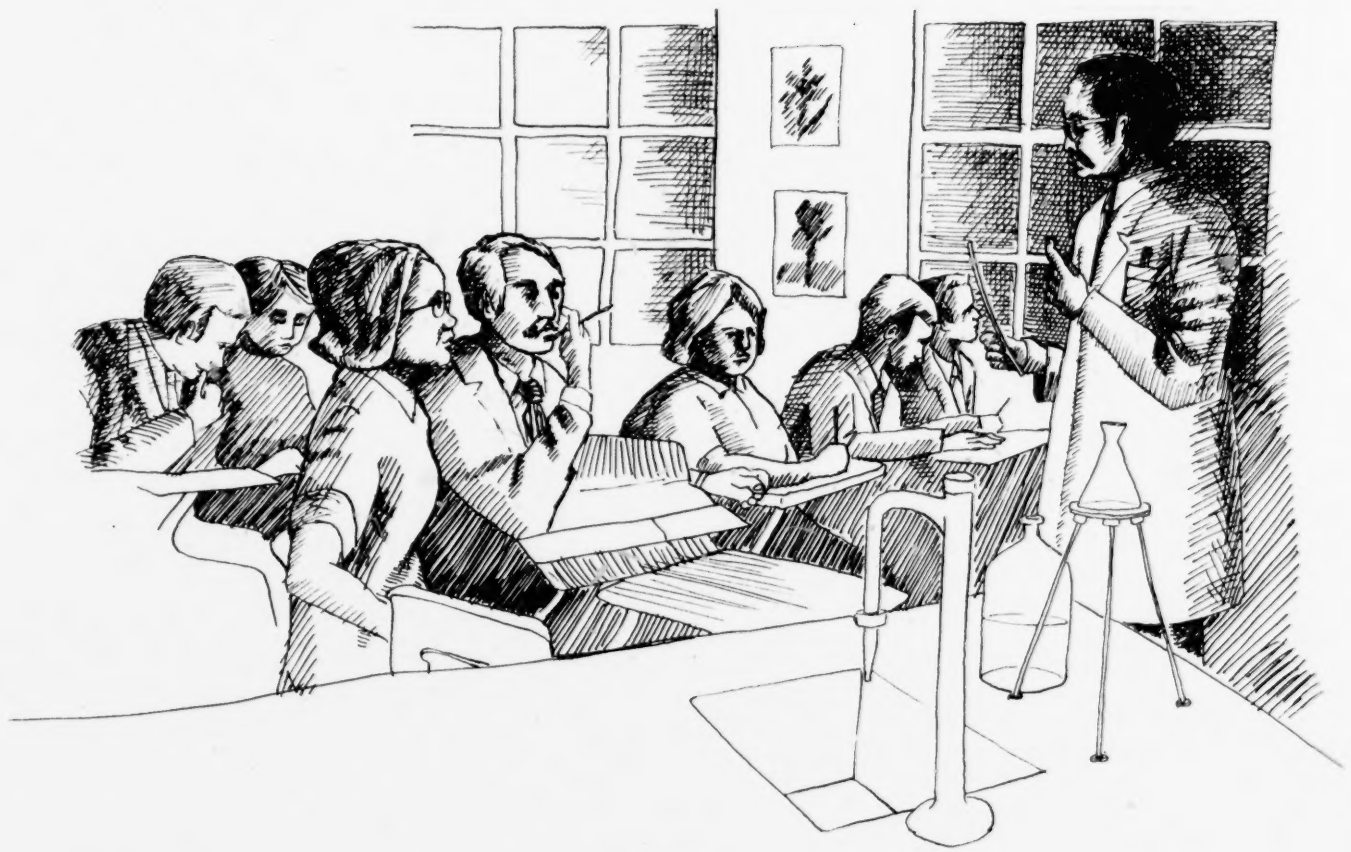
Governmental Sector

By continuing to produce and develop environmental education materials concerned with their special areas of expertise, Federal, State and local governmental units and public officials will serve as major contributors to Texas' environmental education effort. The OEE will catalog governmental environmental publications and assist in disseminating agency materials through their statewide distribution channels.

This type of agency interaction with the OEE will benefit agencies by expanding their environmental education potential.

The functions of the governmental sector in environmental education may be:

- Serve as dissemination agents for environmental education materials. This is especially applicable with agencies having field representatives in constant contact with the general public.



- Generate environmental education materials to be disseminated in co-operation with the OEE. These materials should be bilingual when appropriate.
- Monitor public environmental awareness and needs and inform the OEE.
- Maintain communication between other agencies involved in similar environmental education efforts.
- Provide qualified speakers for the Environmental Speakers Bureau.
- Aid in the promotion of Environmental Education Week.
- Secure Federal and State grants to conduct environmental education projects.

Private Sector

The private sector is composed of groups, organizations or individuals not affiliated with, sanctioned by, or funded by an established governmental entity. It includes private citizens, business and industry, civic and environmental groups, business and trade associations, and others. The private sector will be a source of environmental education resources and

may act as a channel for disseminating materials from the Office of Environmental Education.

Functions of the private sector may be:

- Generate environmental education materials to be disseminated with the help of the Office of Environmental Education.
- Serve as a channel for dissemination of environmental education materials provided by the OEE and other sources.
- Assist in promoting Environmental Education Week.
- Provide qualified speakers for the Environmental Speakers Bureau.
- Secure Federal, State, and private sector grants to conduct environmental education projects.
- Submit ideas for environmental education projects to the Office of Environmental Education.
- Inform the Office of Environmental Education of assessed environmental needs and other pertinent research data.

Quasi-Public Sector

The quasi-public sector includes groups and organizations composed of either a mixture of governmental employees and private citizens or of private citizens acting under governmental sanctions or funding. Examples are the Texas Bar Association, Texas Society of Professional Engineers, Beautify Texas Council and the Texas Conservation Foundation.

Their functions may be to:

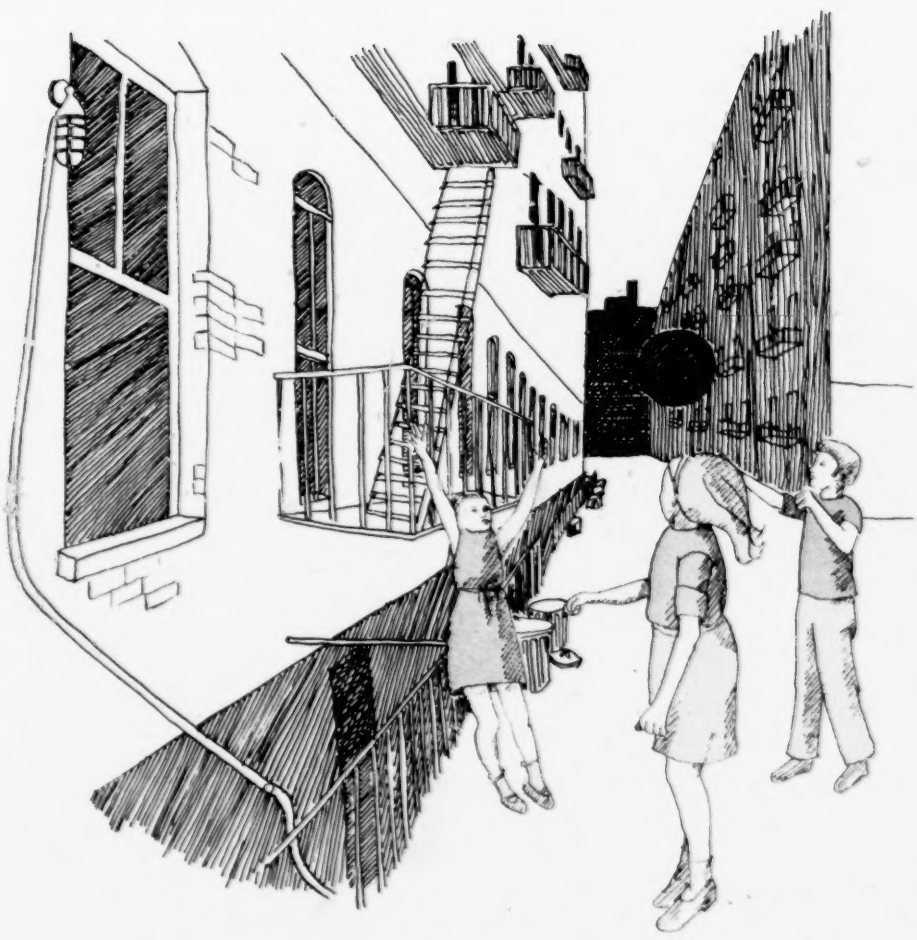
- Use their unique position as a forum between the governmental and private groups to further environmental education efforts.
- Provide qualified speakers for the Environmental Speakers Bureau.
- Contribute expertise and technical assistance to the activities of the Office of Environmental Education.

- Serve as a dissemination channel for environmental education programs and materials provided by the OEE and other sources.
- Aid in promoting Environmental Education Week.
- Conduct environmental education research and inform the Office of Environmental Education of the data.
- Generate environmental education materials.

Educational Institutions

Educational institutions, through their normal activities and with the assistance of the Office of Environmental Education and the Texas Advisory Council on Environmental Education may fulfill the following functions:

- Implement environmental education programs.
- Generate environmental education materials and resources to be disseminated in cooperation with the Office of Environmental Education.
- Provide qualified speakers for the



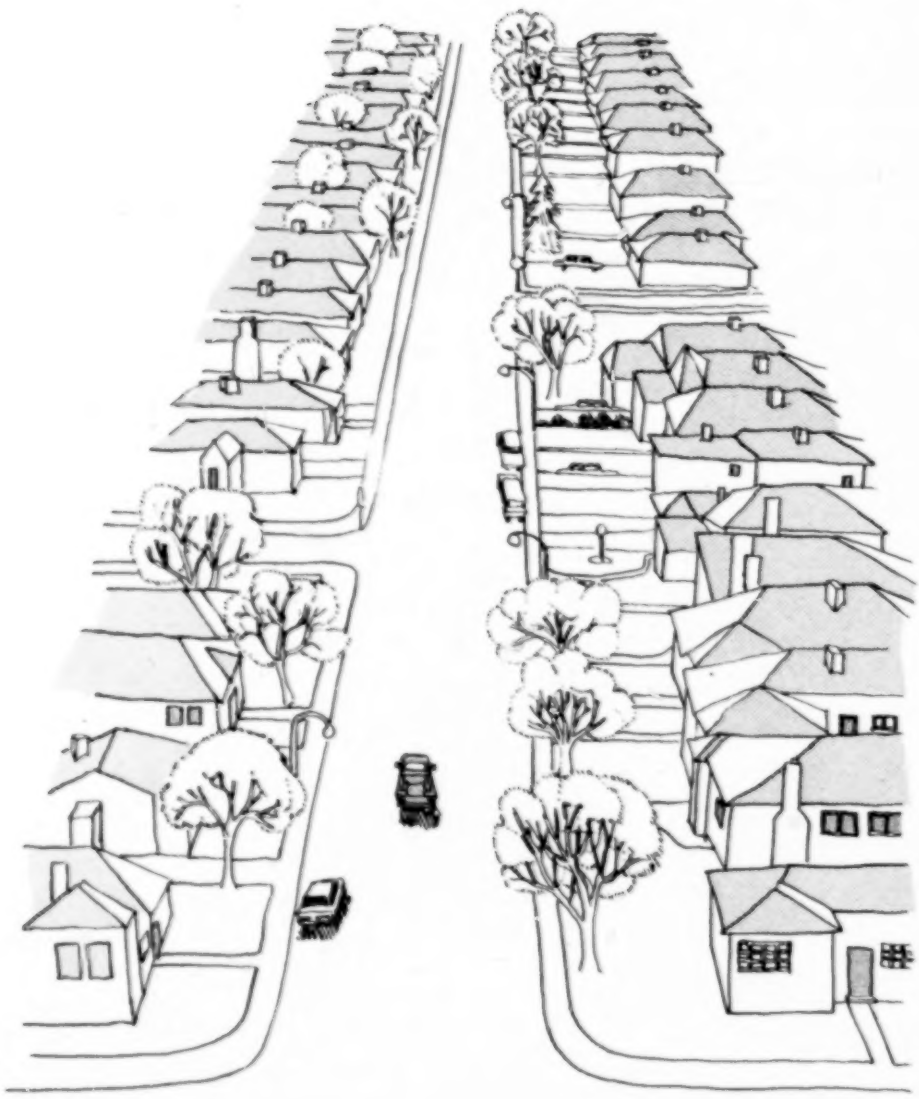
Environmental Speakers Bureau.

- Serve as a channel for dissemination of environmental education resources provided by the OEE and other governmental and private sources.
- Support the expansion of environmental education in the curricula of programs for teacher preparation and continuing education.
- Provide expertise and advice to the Office of Environmental Education.
- Promote and participate in Environmental Education Week.
- Make available to the OEE research data and results that are applicable to environmental education.
- Work with regional representatives to assess local environmental awareness and needs.
- Contribute to the development of bilingual environmental education programs and resources.

PRIORITIES

Because the areas of environmental concern are so numerous, the task of collecting and disseminating information pertaining to all environmental issues would be impractical. Therefore, it will be necessary for the OEE to concentrate on the most pressing environmental issues.

The TACEE should recommend a list of priorities by which the OEE can focus its efforts. As needs and circumstances change, the TACEE will review and update the priority categories.



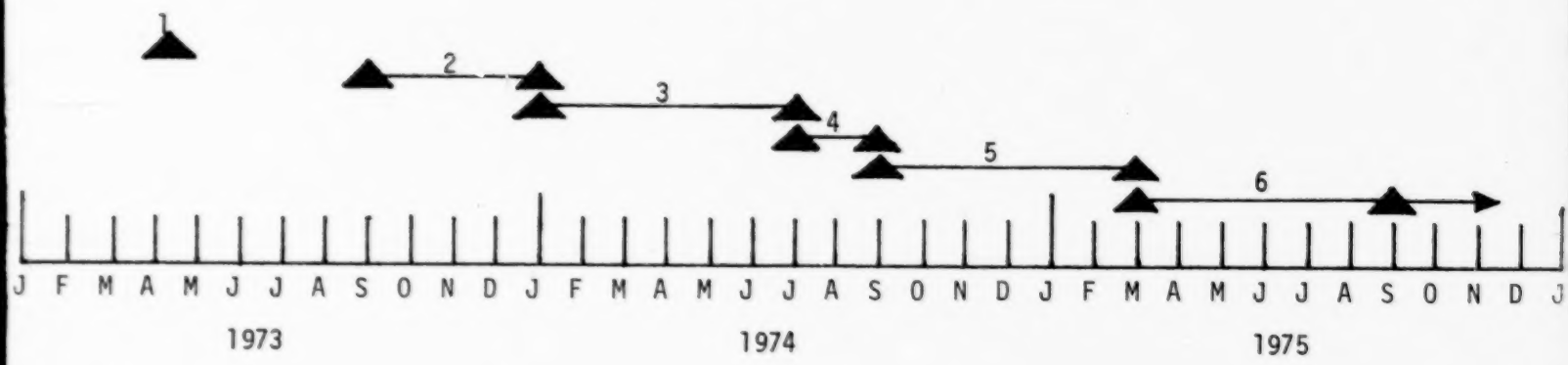
TIME-PHASE SEQUENCE

It is proposed that this State Plan be implemented in the following sequence (see Diagram II):

- April, 1973, presentation of the Texas State Plan for Environmental Education to the Governor.
- September, 1973, through December, 1973, implementation of the State Plan with State funding. The OEE will begin operation and will initiate a statewide clearinghouse for environmental education resources, and will initiate its regional representative program with a limited number of regional offices.
- January, 1974, through June, 1974, evaluation of the effectiveness of the regional representatives. Guidelines will be developed for selecting and training regional representatives and for successfully operating regional offices.
- September, 1974, through February, 1975, expansion of the number of regional offices.
- March, 1975, through September, 1975, continued expansion of the regional offices to establish a designated statewide network.

Diagram II

IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE PLAN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION



1. Submission of the Texas State Plan for Environmental Education to the Governor.
2. Begin implementation of State Plan, initial organizing and staffing of Office of Environmental Education, design statewide clearinghouse and Speakers Bureau.
3. Regional representatives assigned to select regions on a demonstration basis.
4. Evaluation of regional demonstration programs.
5. Expansion of regional offices.
6. Expansion of regional offices to a designated statewide network.

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